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CONTROLLING THE SPREAD OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS CAPABILITY

ANNCR:

A FORMER CHAIRMAN OF THE UNITED STATES ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION -- DAVID LILIENTHAL -- HAS CALLED FOR AN IMMEDIATE HALT IN THE EXPORT OF AMERICAN NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY AND FUEL SUPPLIES. THIS, HE SAYS, IS ESSENTIAL IF THE SPREAD OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS CAPABILITIES IS TO BE STOPPED. NEWS ANALYST RUSSELL DYBVIK HAS THESE OBSERVATIONS ON THE SUBJECT:

VOICE:

THE PROBLEM IS N O T A NEW ONE. BUT IT HAS BECOME MORE URGENT -- AND VASTLY MORE COMPLEX WITH THE GROWING EXPANSION OF NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS ACROSS THE GLOBE, NOW NUMBERING IN THE HUNDREDS.

IT IS N O T A QUESTION OF BANNING THE SALE OF NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY TO ANY GIVEN NATION -- OR GROUP OF NATIONS. IN FACT, THE NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY, WHICH HAS BEEN IN EFFECT SINCE NINETEEN SEVENTY, ENCOURAGES THE FULLEST POSSIBLE EXCHANGE OF EQUIPMENT, MATERIALS AND SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL INFORMATION FOR THE PEACEFUL USES OF NUCLEAR ENERGY.

THE PROBLEM AT HAND -- SIMPLY PUT -- IS DEVELOPING SAFEGUARDS, OR CONTROLS, TO ENSURE THAT NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY IS N O T CONVERTED FROM PEACEFUL PURPOSES TO MILITARY -- OR POTENTIAL MILITARY -- USES.

FOR MANY MONTHS, DOCTOR FRED IKLE -- DIRECTOR OF THE UNITED STATES ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY -- HAS ACTIVELY URGED IMPROVED SAFEGUARDS FOR NUCLEAR MATERIALS AND

DEVICES. (OPT) THIS ALSO INCLUDES PHYSICAL SAFEGUARDS -- TO PREVENT POSSIBLE TERRORIST SEIZURE OF NUCLEAR MATERIALS AND THE SPECTRE OF POSSIBLE NUCLEAR BLACKMAIL. (END OPT) DOCTOR IKLE HAS POINTEDLY WARNED THAT N O W IT IS PEACEFUL NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY THAT PROVIDES N O T ONLY THE MEANS -- BUT ALSO THE COVER -- FOR ALL CASES WHERE A NEW WEAPONS PROGRAM MAY BE UNDER DEVELOPMENT. (OPT) HIS AGENCY ESTIMATES THAT AS MANY AS TWENTY STATES TODAY ARE CAPABLE OF DEVELOPING THEIR OWN NUCLEAR WEAPONS FROM EXISTING TECHNOLOGY -- AND THIS NUMBER IS EXPECTED TO DOUBLE WITHIN A FEW YEARS. (END OPT)

IN THE FACE OF THESE OBVIOUS PROBLEMS, SEVEN NUCLEAR EXPORTING NATIONS, INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES, HAVE BEEN MEETING BEHIND CLOSED DOORS IN LONDON. WHILE THERE HAS BEEN N O OFFICIAL WORD ON THEIR PROGRESS -- NEWSPAPER REPORTS SAY THEY ARE NEARING AGREEMENT ON NEW WAYS TO PREVENT IMPORTING COUNTRIES FROM USING ADVANCE TECHNOLOGY TO MAKE NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

AT THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY LAST SEPTEMBER, SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY KISSINGER PROPOSED CREATION OF NEW MULTINATIONAL REGIONAL NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE CENTERS. THESE WOULD RE-PROCESS NUCLEAR WASTES AND PROVIDE FUEL FOR NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS. (OPT) ONE OF THE PROBLEMS POSED BY NEW TECHNOLOGY -- ESPECIALLY THE SO-CALLED BREEDER REACTOR -- IS THAT MORE NUCLEAR MATERIAL IS PRODUCED THAN THE REACTOR CONSUMES IN ITS OPERATION. (END OPT) SECRETARY KISSINGER FEELS THE REGIONAL CENTERS WOULD HELP LIMIT THE POSSIBILITY OF DIVERTING NUCLEAR MATERIALS FROM PEACEFUL PROGRAMS TO

NATIONAL MILITARY USE -- AND WOULD CREATE A BETTER FRAMEWORK FOR APPLYING INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDS. CURRENTLY, THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (I-A-E-A) IN VIENNA PROVIDES THE PRINCIPAL MEANS FOR POLICING NUCLEAR SAFEGUARDS. AND THE I-A-E-A SOON WILL BEGIN STUDYING THE REGIONAL CENTER CONCEPT.

MEANWHILE, CONGRESS IS CONSIDERING NEW LEGISLATION THAT WOULD TIGHTEN CONTROLS OVER AMERICAN NUCLEAR EXPORTS.

IN HIS TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE -- MISTER LILIENTHAL WARNED THAT PROLIFERATION OF THE CAPABILITY TO PRODUCE NUCLEAR WEAPONS HAS REACHED TERRIFYING PROPORTIONS.

BUT THE QUESTION REMAINS -- WOULD AN EXPORT EMBARGO BY THE U.S. ALONE, SUCH AS THAT ADVOCATED BY MISTER LILIENTHAL, STOP THE PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS CAPABILITIES? (OPT) WEST EUROPEAN AND JAPANESE SUPPLIERS HAVE BEEN TRYING TO BUILD UP THEIR OWN NUCLEAR EXPORT MARKETS. (END OPT)

IT SEEMS LOGICAL THAT A NEW INTERNATIONAL EFFORT TO IMPROVE SAFEGUARDS -- AND WAYS TO ENFORCE THEM -- IS THE PROPER COURSE OF ACTION.

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